

Englands Mercy Explained in the Iust Excecation of William (late) Viscount Stafford a Traytor to his King and Cuntry.



IT has been observed, that nothing has been so destructive to the Peace and Repose of Mankind, as those monstrous Differences in Matters of Religion: and that meek, gentle, and peaceable Christian Religion has been prevaricated by the Devil's Malice and Mens Lusts, to be the cause of most dreadful Heats and Animosities. Amongst all contests of that nature, none has been so long continued, and with that Warmth Vigour and Activity, as that between Christ and Antichrist. For Popery as it was founded in Blood, Treason, and Treachery, so it has been propagated and maintained by a continual Series of more than Devillish Cruelties and cunningness; It has interwoven it self with the Pollices of all the States in Europe, and linked most of the Crowns of Christendom to its Interest. But herein it has most eminently outstripped all the other implacable Enemies of God, that it has usurped an absolute Jurisdiction over mens Souls and Consciences; and thereby debauch't them so far, as to think the blackest Crimes to be Meritorious Acts, and to boggle at no Villany, though never so horrid, for the Advantages of the Romish Sea; nay, what is more, think that therein they do God good Service. And though Eternal Justice has eminently declared it self against them and their Practices by various Methods and Dispensations; as sometimes by hanging up as it were, some of the Notorious Malefactors in Chains, and making them publick Monuments of his Severity; yet so hardened and blinded have they been by their Sin, so misled by a villainous Crew of Canting and lying Priests and Fryars, that they have really believed, that the Penalty inflicted on them for their bloody Villanies, has been their Martyrdom. We see the Devil may have Martyrs as well as God. Among Instances of this kind, was that lamentable Object, that deserves our great pity, who was executed lately on Tower-Hill for his Hellish Treasons. He was a Peer of this Realm, and nobly descended, very considerable as to Estate, and allied to many great Families; no doubt, he had Gentility running in his Veins, having derived it from his great Ancestors. But observe the damnable perniciousness of the Romish Religion, whose bloody Principles and Tenets he having once sucked in, thought himself in Conscience obliged to violate all Laws, both Sacred and Humane, to lay aside all Loyalty and Gratitude towards his

Prince; of whose Royal Bounty and Favours he had in a special manner so largely and so frequently tasted, and under whose gracious Government he and his Fraternity lived so securely and peaceably, and enjoyed very quietly without any molestation, the exercise of their Religion notwithstanding; nay, had many severe Laws to the contrary, several Advantages above several of other his Majesties Protestant Subjects; and yet maliciously to conspire to Assassinate so good a Prince, so gracious to him in particular, and to bring a storm of Ruine and Confusion on his native Land, O monstrous and more than Devilish Villany!

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorem.

But for all these infernal Treasons and Conspiracies, he was at last brought to publick Justice, and after a fair Tryal, was cast by the Lords his Judges, where he received the following Sentence from the Mouth of the Lord High Steward in Westminster-Hall, December the 7th. 1680.

The Judgment of the Law is, and this Court doth accord, you go to the place from whence you came, from thence you must be drawn on a Hurdle to the place of Execution; when you come there, you must be hanged up by the Neck, but not till you are dead, for you must be cut down alive, your privy Members must be cut off, your Bowels ript up before your Face, and thrown into the Fire. Then your Head must be severed from your Body, and your Body divided into four Quarters, and those must be at the disposal of the King, and Almighty God be merciful to your Soul.

After Sentence pronounced, the Lord High Steward told the Prisoner, that the House of Lords in consideration of his Quality, do intend to move the King to pardon all the rest of the Execution of his Sentence, except only the taking off his Head: Which his Majesty was graciously pleased to grant.

And he was Executed accordingly by severing his Head from his Shoulders.

And we will do him the Honour to give him this Elegy.

Thus Stafford for his horred Treasons fell
A misled Martyr unto Rome and Hell;
And thus Eternal Vengeance first does blast
The Traitors Plots, and ruins them at last,
Snaky Ambition who dost alwayes twine
Thy self 'bout great mens Thoughts, and dost encline
And hurry them on violent Actions Skill,
Betrayest the Judgment, and corrupt'st the Will:
Makes them to think they'll ne're stand high enough,
Cheat'st them with Honours that's an empty puff
Still forcest them to soar up higher higher
Tho't be through Sin, through Blood, through Sword, through
Till to the Temples Pinnacle they'r flown, (Fire)
Then let'st them fall, prest with a Vengeance down.
If with false Notions of Religion clad,
Thou then let'st loose thy Reins and run'st stark mad.
Dost tols and wrack the Minds thou dost enslave,
Till brought with Shame and ruine to the Grave.
Deluded Stafford, miserable Wight,
Was a great Instance of thy cursed spite.
Curst Popery, whose Principles do's bend
Its Bigots to such Actions, such an end,
We must rejoyce for Justice done t'him all,
And yet lament his miserable Fall.
And Curse the Infernal Maxims of proud Rome,
Who brought so great a Man to such a Doom.
EPITAPH.

Poor wretched Viscount Stafford here lies dead,
Here lies his Body, but without a Head.
Still that was Plotting against Church and State.
For which the Laws adjudg'd it such a Fate.

All that are not Printed for the above said Persons, are Counterfits.

London, Printed for N. Ponder at the Sign of the Peacock over against the Stocks-Market. and J. Lee at the Feathers in Lombard-Street, near the Post-Office.